Classroom discussions as distortions: Examining discriminatory teacher practices

Teresa Sosa, Catherine D. Bhathena

Abstract

Ms. Mendez, English department chair in a large urban high school, has noticed a persistent pattern in the practices of her colleagues. These practices tend to be racially insensitive and emphasize a non-critical view that does not attend to students' experiences and positions students from a deficit perspective. Realizing that such practices serve as social reproductions of racist, and classist orientations that reproduce the existing social order (Bartolome, 2004), Ms. Mendez decided school leadership should be informed. However, she worries that the school's leadership will not work to enact change and instead will take her concerns lightly.

ERIC Descriptors: Culturally relevant pedagogy; Socially just leadership; Inclusive decision making

---

This is the author's manuscript of the article published in final edited form as:

Sosa, T., & Bhathena, C. D. (2017). Classroom discussions as distortions: Examining discriminatory teacher practices. Journal of Cases in Educational Leadership, 20(1), 22-33. https://doi.org/10.1177/1555458916688506

Case Narrative

Ms. Mendez is a fourth-year teacher and head of the English Department at City High School (CHS). Although a fairly new teacher, her peers elected her head of the department based on her strong pedagogical practices and relationships with her students. The school principal, Mrs. Yarell, is new to CHS this year and she decided to meet with Ms. Mendez to get a sense of her ideas about how to engage teachers in ongoing in-school professional development to enhance their practice. Mrs. Yarell is particularly interested in how department chairs are addressing the high failure rates of students in the school that she has recently been assigned to. The principal is aware of some of the issues that her new school faces, but finds that she needs more clarity about what is taking place in the school.

During the meeting Ms. Mendez explains to the principal and assistant principals, Dr. Hill and Mr. Lewis, that the teachers in the English Department, and most likely in all other departments, need professional development in culturally relevant and responsive pedagogy and the need for peer observations. By partaking in observations of peers, Ms. Mendez believes two things can be accomplished: 1) highlight the expertise of teachers at CHS and find ways for instituting these strong pedagogical practices among the whole ELA Department; and 2) understanding better the issues contributing to student disengagement and academic failure. Ms. Yarell agrees that peer observations will be useful and in the need for professional development regarding practices that align with students' cultural knowledge. Ms. Mendez leaves the meeting relieved that the new principal sees the importance of connecting students' culture and linguistic practices to curriculum but is also hesitant as to what she can accomplish in this school. After all, Ms. Yarell may be new to the school but Mr. Lewis and Dr. Hill have been there over six years

and their focus has been on standardized test scores and both often talk about serving "difficult" students.

School Context

City High School serves a low-income city neighborhood (98% of students qualified for free or reduced lunch). The school is comprised of mainly African American (67 %), Latina/ o (24%), and White students (7%). CHS has been placed in remediation[1] for the past four years and this has had an effect on teachers and students. The school status has in part surfaced discussions and interpretations by teachers and staff regarding students' lives and families as having a lack of interest, support, and willingness to succeed in school. In turn, the school has labeled and identified students as "struggling" and positioned them as "at risk."

Tracking and the status of the school (largely supported by federal and state policies) has had consequences on the types of texts, tasks, and activities that students are asked to carry out in the classroom. In ELA classrooms, for example, "regular" (unofficially known as "low-track") classes are steeped in rote learning and worksheets and with little to no discussions of the texts read. Low-track courses predominantly enroll African American and Latino students. The status of the school and the issues that pervade the school (along with the pervasive failure of public schools in general) are often explained through deficit views, including those related to cultural and characteristic differences of marginalized groups (cf. McDermott, 1987), or lack of skills, knowledge and interactional styles necessary to succeed in school.

[1] Remediation status for this school district indicates the need for provisional support by the School Board. Specifically, this is a low rating status given to schools that fail to develop, implement, or comply with the school improvement plan and the absence of improvement in reading and math achievement scores, an increased dropout rate, a decreased graduation rate, or a decrease in the rate of student attendance.

The political dynamics that shape the school system contributes to the feel of the school as resistant to improvement and change. In particular, the school and district leadership has not been significantly shifted in the last decade, leaving school administrators such as Dr. Hill and Ms. Lewis in place to continue framing school and learning around improving standardize test scores and a meritocratic emphasis on student academic success and failure. All these aspects serve as justification for many teachers to practice and interact with students in ways that are detrimental to students.

Observations

Ms. Mendez discussed with her English department colleagues peer observations as part of in-school professional development. She made it clear that she would also be partaking in peer observations, by observing other teachers and other teachers observing her, as a way to provide concrete support for teachers and deepen her own practice. She also made it clear that these observations would not serve as evaluations but were an opportunity to raise critical questions and point out possible assumptions and contradictions in the pedagogical practices observed, including her own. Peer observations were to take place during the second semester of the school year.

The ELA Department teachers agreed to conduct observations during their prep period once every two weeks and to work out the schedules amongst each other. At first many teachers did visit each other's classrooms and talked informally after the observations. However, after two months, some teachers began coming to Ms. Mendez to share that the process was not working. These teachers felt they were the only ones going to classrooms to observe and that they could not find anyone to come to their rooms in return. Additionally, Ms. Mendez discovered that some teachers would sit in during only part of a lesson (sometimes interrupting

class as they came in late or left early) and then afterward simply state, “good lesson” or “interesting lesson,” without providing any suggestions, ideas, or questions that might deepen practice. She was also aware that five teachers in particular did not conduct any observations or made their rooms available for observation (citing a test, a review day or simply “not a good day” as their reason).

In addition to the challenges of getting all teachers to participate in the peer observations, a few teachers spoke to Ms. Mendez about their discomfort and anger at what they were seeing in their colleagues’ classrooms. They described practices based solely on worksheets that provided little opportunity for complex thinking. Also, when critical issues, specifically related to racial discrimination, came up in discussions, the particular stance on the part of the teachers was disturbing due to their lack of willingness to hear students’ points of view or easily dismiss them. Even more upsetting were the reports of how teacher interactions with their students indicated a high level of disrespect, had racist overtones, and demonstrated views of students as lacking the ability to succeed academically. Ms. Mendez did not have to just hear from other teachers. Even before her colleagues began speaking with her about their frustrations over what they were noticing, her observations prompted serious concerns of her own. The following are a few examples of what Ms. Mendez and others observed.

Before visiting Ms. Holloway’s third period, she mentioned to Ms. Mendez that she was looking forward to doing a lesson on the recent Ferguson case[1]. Ms. Holloway felt that students could benefit from discussing the recent tensions between Black communities and law enforcement. Ms. Mendez viewed this as an important lesson, one in which students could find the space to voice their frustration, fears, and questions surrounding these events, as well as a

space where they could talk about their own experiences in their neighborhood. She was excited to see the discussion unfold.

During that actual lesson however, Ms. Holloway did not provide an open forum for discussion and her main point to students was that violence was not a solution to the tensions being discussed and that all sides of the matter had to be taken into account. When students shared their experiences of violence towards them and were adamant about their belief that violence was one of the solutions in some cases, Ms. Holloway quickly dismissed them and again pushed her own view as the right one. She also refused to discuss the fact that this incident was largely connected to race and power issues, suggesting that oftentimes, Black adolescents do things that get them in trouble.

After class, Ms. Holloway confided that the lesson did not go as well as expected because "they just don't want to think rationally about this." Ms. Mendez asked about some of the insightful statements students made during the discussion. Specifically, she asked about the exchange between Ms. Holloway and Tanya, a student, whose retort pointed to the irony of preaching that the Black community should be non-violent when others are violent towards the Black community. In that particular exchange, Ms. Holloway, in trying to convince students about how people should act in non-violent ways, had asked, "But what about Martin Luther King's non-violent approach?" Tanya solemnly responded, "He got shot." Ms. Holloway dismissed the insights and claimed students were simply lashing out and not wanting to be in a discussion that forced them to think about how all parties had responsibilities in what was happening and that adding to the violence would not solve anything.

In another lesson that Ms. Mendez observed, Mr. Conway was beginning the novel *To Kill a Mockingbird*. One student, Will, objected to reading the book, stating that he had read it

previously and that teaching this book only "taught people that White folks can kill Black folks and get away with it." Mr. Conway ignored the student's comment and instructed the class to begin reading the text silently, without providing any understanding of the historical context or objectives for reading the novel. Later, Ms. Mendez asked Mr. Conway why he did not take the opportunity to discuss the racial tensions and violence described in the book and the importance of re-reading novels. He defensively responded that Will was simply complaining and making remarks without ever actually having read the book and that he only critiqued the novel as an excuse not to read or do homework during the next six weeks, the length of the unit that included the novel.

Ms. Mendez also heard from a fellow teacher about a boy in Ms. Finley's class who seemed to be physically removed from all the other students and who rarely got called on to contribute despite his hand being constantly up. Ms. Finley explained that he repeatedly was talking to other students, walking around and saying aloud that the class was boring, and generally trying to interrupt the lesson. However, the observer noticed that when the student was called to respond the teacher would dismiss his responses with offensive remarks. For example, at one point the student remarked that the poem they were reading reminded him of a painting at a museum. The teacher stopped the class to loudly ask, "Really? You've been to a museum? Are you sure you aren't thinking of a commercial or video game?" When the observer asked Ms. Finley how she tried to engage the student in the class, she stated, "I ignore him most of the time; he is not too bright."

Ms. Mendez was mindful of how racism and deficit thinking was manifested in the ways Black and Latino students were routinely mistrusted ("He did not read the book before; He won't do any work"), their ability was doubted ("Can't do more than the basics"), and were categorized

as lazy and unmotivated ("They don't want to put forth effort; They don't want to learn"). Similarly, students' communities and families were often summed up in phrases such as, "These kids have no one who cares about their education at home. I can only do so much." As Mrs. Lorde confided in Ms. Mendez after a staff meeting, "These kids are not taught any manners at home, have no interest in learning, and just don't want to do anything." The discourse about students in the teacher's lounge and in staff meetings was frequently of this nature and several teachers from most departments shared these views.

Based on the feedback from teachers and her own observations, Ms. Mendez realized that these issues were largely due to a disconnect between White teachers and their Black and Latino students. At CHS, the faculty was mostly White (71%) while the student body was 91% Black and Latina/o combined. Such disconnect manifested in systemic racism and deficit thinking and pervaded many of the observed teachers' practices. Although research (Irvine, 1990, Ladson-Billings, 1991; Oates, 2003; Villegas & Irvine, 2010) indicates that teachers of color tend to have higher expectations for students of color than their White counterparts, Ms. Mendez noted that some teachers of color also had low expectations for students and created busy work for them instead of engaging them in meaningful academic tasks and discussions.

Check in visit with Administration

During her check in visit with administration, Ms. Mendez explained that while she was already aware of this undercurrent at her school, she was nonetheless shocked to learn how pervasive the disrespect for students and irrelevant the lessons and ways of teaching really were. She explained and provided examples of how teachers' lessons seemed to intentionally ignore the lives of their students by not allowing for critical discussions of complex issues that mattered to their community. Ms. Mendez also shared that negative talk about students was pervasive

beyond the English Department and was often mired in deficit views of student knowledge, language, and culture.

As Ms. Mendez raised these issues, they were regarded differently by the three administrators. Dr. Hill quickly dismissed the issues Ms. Mendez raised, suggesting the school had "difficult students" and "good teachers." Mr. Lewis shifted the conversation to how observations might be ways to "ensure" that teachers prepare students for the yearly standardized tests. Mrs. Yarell, the principal, then shifted the conversation back to what Ms. Mendez's initiative had uncovered. She and Ms. Mendez agreed that this would require serious focus by the principal and assistant principals in helping teachers interrogate their ideological beliefs and related practices about teaching in urban communities. This would also require intense, focused, professional development and support of teachers to be culturally sensitive and see the importance of cultural relevance in their pedagogy. Ms. Yarell also emphasized her strong support in working with Ms. Mendez and other department chairs in shifting both the practices and beliefs about the students in her new school.

Teaching Notes & Discussion Questions

This case presents the challenges faced by a teacher leader as she confronts disturbing practices by her fellow teachers. It also presents an opening for teacher leaders and principals to work together to improve instruction and school culture with an eye toward reform (Mangin & Stoelinga, 2008; Roby, 2011). In particular, this case study offers an opportunity for principals and prospective principals to explore how they might approach such a collaboration with Ms. Mendez to address the issues that surfaced through peer observations regarding teachers' lack of asset-based pedagogies that draw of students' cultural frames of reference and the pervasiveness of deficit attitudes towards students and families within the English Department, and possibly

beyond. Additionally, the case study opens a conversation about the benefits and drawbacks of having a closed leadership system, such as what is seen here, or a shared leadership system that invites not only teacher leaders but families and community organizations to be part of the school decision-making process.

City High School's teaching staff is over 70% White while Black and Brown students make up over 90% of the student body. These percentages are similar to many large urban schools across the country (Boser, 2011) and such disconnects between teacher practices and student knowledge, culture, and language may not be farfetched from what a principal may encounter in a new school. As such, three broad needs are evident in this case study: instructional leadership focused on culturally relevant and culturally responsive pedagogy, socially just leadership that aims to eliminate deficit views of students and families; and shared leadership that will incorporate teacher and community leaders in the decision making process.

Q: Current pressures on principals due to accountability measures are higher than ever and not meeting goals for standardized test scores can lead to principal job loss and school closings (Gooden, 2012; Ylimaki, 2007). This reality can mean principals have to make a big impact in a short amount of time. With this in mind, based on the information from this case study, what are the most important short-term and long-term goals that the administrators, in coordination with teacher leaders, need to address? Why are these the most important? Who benefits from achieving these goals? How do they address the three issues put forward in this case study: need for culturally responsive practices, socially just leadership in addressing deficit views of students and families, and the need for shared leadership?

Q: As a new principal or other leader coming into this urban school district, how do you develop leadership knowledge and skills as described by Ylamaki (2007) to improve the learning of students in this school? What experiences have you had in your leadership program that prepares you for success in navigating these instructional/pedagogical challenges?

Instructional Leadership: Culturally Relevant Pedagogy

Ms. Mendez and her like-minded colleagues used a critical lens during observations to situate classrooms and the interactions that happen within them as influenced by larger sociocultural and political frameworks. Such frameworks are 'ideological' and therefore rooted in a world-view that supports particular students and marginalizes others. In urban schools, valued or "legitimate" knowledge is often juxtaposed or in conflict with the local everyday practices and language that students of color bring to the classroom (Rex, 2006; Smitherman, 2004). This often leads to a devaluing of students' culture and community. "Such deficit perspectives limit learning opportunities and lower expectations and achievement for students, specifically in relation to White teachers and students of color" (Delpit, 2002; Valenzuela, 1999 as cited in Vetter, 2013, p. 174).

Because it is mostly White teachers teaching students of color in this school, as in most urban settings (Snyder & Dillow, 2012), classroom interactions, tasks, and activities must emphasize cultural relevance in instruction (Gay, 2010; Ladson-Billings, 1994; Yosso, 2005). Ladson-Billings (1999) emphasizes three aspects embodied in culturally relevant pedagogy: academic achievement, cultural competence, and sociopolitical critique. These three aspects require that student knowledge form the basis of inquiry, be reflected and valued in the curriculum, and employed to question inequities. Ylimaki and Jacobson (2013) emphasize that

school-wide culturally responsive practices are those that "incorporate the history, values and cultural knowledge of students' home communities in the school curriculum to develop a critical consciousness among students and faculty to challenge inequalities in the larger society and empower parents from diverse communities" (p. 15). Culturally responsive practices require knowing the students and families the school serves, and that teachers and leaders see parents and families as resources, not problems (Delpit, 2002, p. 180). Thus, taking action in part entails identifying and critically examining ways to value students and their community and is one step toward developing culturally relevant practices and becoming a socially just leader.

Q: Based on the case study description, how would you describe the cultural assumptions that are being enacted at City High School? As a new school leader, what steps would you take to identify and address the repercussions of such cultural assumptions?

Socially Just Leadership: Combating Deficit Views of Students and Families

In this case study, deficit views of students and their families are observed not only in classroom lessons but also in conversations in the teachers' lounge and faculty meetings. This indicates a school culture that is accepting of such views. It is also evident in the case study that this school culture is not one the new principal is content with and is something she wants to address. Hoy and Hoy (2006) describe four levels of culture, moving from the most abstract to the most concrete: Tacit Assumptions, Core Values, Shared Norms, and Artifacts (p. 302). Glickman, et al. (2007) state:

> Educators' beliefs about education often are influenced by cultural assumptions they may not be aware of because the assumptions are so deeply ingrained and taken for granted. These assumptions can influence curriculum that educators design, their relationships

> with students and parents, the lessons they plan, and so forth. Because of the influences of our cultural assumptions and beliefs on students, it is not sufficient for us simply to articulate our beliefs and then base educational goals and practices on those beliefs. Rather, we should attempt to identify and critically examine our cultural assumptions. Such critique, often done in dialogue with others, can cause us to change assumptions that have negative effects on colleagues and students. (p. 108)

Socially just leadership requires asking faculty and administration to engage in such critique of self, school, and systems to arrive at the culturally responsive practices described above. Additionally, Scheurich and Skrla (2003) describe the impact of such culturally responsive practices on school and classroom discipline: “When we provide caring, respectful, appreciative, high quality instruction for children, they respond. Thus, discipline problems in general should be seen as evidence that there is something wrong” (p. 59). Therefore, the issues some teachers in the case study had with students could disappear with the implementation of culturally responsive practices. Finally, Scheurich and Skrla (2003) make it clear that one person cannot do everything to lead a school; principals and other school leaders must share the responsibilities for making schools more equitable (p. 100).

> Q: As a new principal in this school, how would you work towards building strong connections and trust with the community the school serves and with teachers and teacher leaders in order to initiate and support interactions among them aimed toward better understanding of students and culturally responsive pedagogy?

Inclusive Decision Making: One Vision, Many Actors

Blasé and Blasé (1999a; 1999b; 2000) have studied effective school leadership through shared governance. By looking at this leadership approach from both the teacher and principal

perspectives, they have found shared governance to be effective because the principal's role is changing and collaborative and open leadership is valued more now than in the past. Brooks, Jean-Marie, Normore, and Hodgins (2007), in their study found that linking the concepts of shared leadership and social justice "can benefit aspiring and practicing school leaders because it connects the social mission of most schools to the practice of everyday leadership activity" (p. 400). When all types of school leaders work toward a common social justice mission, students' needs are addressed (Kraft, Papay, Johnson, Charner-Laird, Ng, & Reinhorn, 2015), teachers are professionalized and empowered, and student achievement increases (Theoharis, 2010). This becomes possible when school leaders grow to be more culturally responsive and are then "willing to guide teachers into having courageous conversations where they interrogate their assumptions about race and culture and their impact on the classroom" (Khalifa, Gooden, & Davis, 2016, p. 10).

These are the types of conversations Ms. Mendez would like to see initiated as a result of the English department's work doing classroom observation. Mrs. Yarrell, the principal, also recognizes the need for these conversations. Such difficult conversations are a critical part of the process of enacting both shared leadership (Brooks, et al., 2007) and socially just leadership (as described above). As Kraft, et al. (2015) explain:

> if the school as a whole is to be responsive to students' academic and social strengths and needs, improvement efforts must be systematic rather than piecemeal or accidental. This necessarily involves more than adopting an "open-systems" perspective; it also requires active work by teachers and school leaders working together to decide how best to address students' needs and the uncertainty they bring to public schools. (p. 780)

Such an open system recognizes the influence of the school, home, and community on what is

happening in the classroom and invites a variety of people to participate as leaders on various occasions, thereby empowering them. Theoharris (2010) describes such empowerment as being democratic and "sharing decision-making and developing a culture of trust and professional respect" (p. 354). Additionally, the principals in his study made connections with family and community. Families that were historically not heard or seen in schools were invited to participate in conversations about many issues and community organizations and providers were linked with students and families who had need of their services. This was all part of "their commitment to the achievement of marginalized students" (p. 363).

It is clear from this case study that achievement is of great concern to the assistant principals and that they are not putting the same emphasis as the principal on social justice and culturally responsive teaching and leadership. They are understandably concerned with achievement and test scores. Gooden (2012) identified standardized test scores as one of the growing pressures on urban school principals because, as author explains about one principal, "he will be held accountable and his effectiveness measured by his standardized test scores" (p. 81). Despite these pressures, Theoharris (2010) found that the principals in his study were able to weave together tests and data with social justice leadership and teaching in ways that lead to multifaceted improvement in their schools that went beyond achievement measures.

> Although accountability is presently a politically charged concept, these principals did not use accountability in a punitive sense. They demonstrated a commitment to understanding the realities of their schools and used data to help build that understanding for their teachers and for themselves. Their desire to have and use data allowed them to lead discussions and planning around specific realities of their students, and in particular, their students with the greatest needs (p. 347).

So, these principals saw testing and data as one more tool to use in their work as socially just leaders. Such leaders have a strong vision for their schools, they use that to guide all their decisions (Brooks, et al., 2007; Theoharris, 2010), and they use leadership styles that are a combination of top-down and bottom up leadership. So, said leaders recognize that leadership for social justice "does not necessarily reside in superhero leaders who inspire those around them to rise up against inequity; rather, it may instead be something practiced between leaders and followers" (Brooks, et al., 2007, p. 402) with a shared vision for their school.

Q: In what ways could you, as the principal of this school, use the concepts of shared governance, culturally relevant and responsive teaching, and social justice to extend the work that Ms. Mendez is doing as Department Chair while addressing the concerns of the assistant principals?

Q: What have you learned in your principalship program about how to cultivate and support teacher and community leaders? How might you use this learning to systematically work to changing the culture of the school described in this case study?

Notes

[1] The Ferguson case involved Michael Brown, an unarmed black teenager who was shot and killed August, 2014, by Darren Wilson, a White police officer, in Ferguson, Missouri. The shooting prompted protests in the area for weeks. Three months later, a grand jury decided not to indict Mr. Wilson. The announcement set off another wave of protests.

References

Allen, Q. (2015). Race, culture and agency: Examining the ideologies and practices of US teachers of Black male students. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, *47*, 71-81.

Bartolome, L. I. (2004). Critical pedagogy and teacher education: radicalizing prospective teachers. *Teacher Education Quarterly*, 31(1), 97-122.

Blase, J., & Blase, J. (1999a). Implementation of shared governance for instructional improvement: Principals' perspectives. *Journal of educational administration, 37*(5), 476-500.

Blase, J., & Blase, J. (1999b). Principals' instructional leadership and teacher development: Teachers' perspectives. *Educational administration quarterly, 35*(3), 349-378.

Blase, J., & Blase, J. (2000). Effective instructional leadership: Teachers' perspectives on how principals promote teaching and learning in schools. *Journal of Educational Administration, 38*(2), 130-141.

Boser, U. (2011). Teacher Diversity Matters: A State-by-State Analysis of Teachers of Color. *Center For American Progress*.

Brooks, J. S., Jean-Marie, G., Normore, A. H., & Hodgins, D. W. (2007). Distributed leadership for social justice: Exploring how influence and equity are stretched over an urban high school. *Journal of School Leadership, 17*, 378-408.

Delpit, L. D. (2006). *Other people's children: Cultural conflict in the classroom*. New York, NY: The New Press.

Gay, G. (2010). *Culturally responsive teaching: Theory, research, and practice*. Teachers College Press.

Glickman, C. D., Gordon, S. P., & Ross-Gordon, J. M. (2007). *Supervision and instructional leadership: A developmental approach*. Needham Heights, MA: Allyn & Bacon.

Gooden, M. A. (2012). What does racism have to do with leadership? Countering the idea of color-blind leadership: A reflection on race and the growing pressures of the urban principalship. *Educational Foundations*, (Winter-Spring) 67-84: EJ968818.

Irvine, J. J. (1990). *Black students and school failure.* Westport, CT: Praeger.

Johnson, L. (2007). Rethinking successful school leadership in challenging U.S. schools: Culturally responsive practices in school-community relationships. *International Studies in Educational Administration (Commonwealth Council for Educational Administration & Management (CCEAM)), 35*(3), 49-57.

Khalifa, M. A., Gooden, M. A., & Davis, J. E. (2016). Culturally responsive school leadership: A synthesis of the literature. *Review of Educational Research, XX*(X), 1-40.

Kraft, M. A., Papay, J. P., Johnson, S. M., Charner-Laird, M., Ng, M., & Reinhorn, S. (2015). Educating amid uncertainty: The organizational supports teachers need to serve students in high-poverty, urban schools. *Educational Administration Quarterly, 51*(5), 753-790.

Ladson-Billings, G. (1991). Beyond multicultural illiteracy. Journal of Negro Education, 60(2), 147-157.

Ladson-Billings, G. (1994). *The dreamkeepers: Successful teachers of African American children*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Ladson-Billings, G. J. (1999). Preparing teachers for diverse student populations: A critical race theory perspective. *Review of research in education*, 211-247.

Louis, K. S., & Wahlstrom, K. (2011). Principals as cultural leaders. *Kappan, 9*(5), 52-56.

Mangin M. M. & Stoelinga, S. A. (2008). Teacher leadership: Why it is and why it matters. In Mangin M. M. & Stoelinga, S. A. (Eds.), *Effective teacher leadership: Using research to inform and reform*, pp. 1-9. New York, NY: Teachers College Press.

Nelson, S. W., & Guerra, P. L. (2013). Educator beliefs and cultural knowledge implications for school improvement efforts. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 0013161X13488595.

Oates, G. L. S. C. (2003). Teacher-student racial congruence, teacher perceptions, and test performance. *Social Science Quarterly*, *84*(3), 508-525.

Rex, L. A. (2006). Acting" Cool" and" Appropriate": Toward a Framework for considering Literacy Classroom Interactions When Race is a Factor. *Journal of Literacy Research*, *38*(3), 275-325.

Roby, D. E. (2011). Teacher leaders impacting school culture. *Education, 131*(4), 782-790.

Santamaría, L. J. (2014). Critical change for the greater good: Multicultural perceptions in educational leadership toward social justice and equity. *Educational Administration Quarterly, 50*(3), 347-391. doi: 10.1177/0013161X13505287

Scheurich, J. J., & Skrla, L. (2003). *Leadership for equity and excellence: Creating high-achievement classrooms, schools, and districts*: Corwin Press

Scribner, S. M. P., & Bradley-Levine, J. (2010). The meaning (s) of teacher leadership in an urban high school reform. *Educational Administration Quarterly, 46*(4), 491-522.

Sleeter, C. E. (2012). Confronting the marginalization of culturally responsive pedagogy. *Urban Education, 47*(3), 562-584.

Smitherman, G. (2004). Language and African Americans: Movin on up a lil higher. *Journal of English Linguistics*, 32, 186–196.

Snyder, T. D., & Dillow, S. A. (2012). *Digest of education statistics 2011*. National Center for Education Statistics.

Theoharis, G. (2010). Disrupting injustice: Principals narrate the strategies they use to improve their schools and advance social justice. *Teachers College Record, 112*(1), 331-373.

Vetter, A. (2013). "You Need Some Laugh Bones!" Leveraging AAL in a High School English Classroom. *Journal of Literacy Research*, *45*(2), 173-206.

Villegas, A. M., & Irvine, J. J. (2010). Diversifying the teaching force: An examination of major arguments. *The Urban Review*, *42*(3), 175-192.

Weiner, J. M. (2011). Finding common ground: Teacher leaders and principals speak out about teacher leadership. *Journal of School Leadership, 21*(1), 7-41.

Ylimaki, R. & Jacobson, S. (2013). School leadership practice and preparation: Comparative perspectives on organizational learning (OL), instructional leadership (IL) and culturally responsive practices (CRP). *Journal of Educational Administration, (51)*1, 6-23. doi: 10.1108/09578231311291404

Ylimaki, R. M. (2007). Instructional Leadership in Challenging US Schools. *International Studies In Educational Administration (Commonwealth Council For Educational Administration & Management (CCEAM)), 35*(3), 11-19.

Yosso, T. J. (2005). Whose culture has capital? A critical race theory discussion of community cultural wealth. *Race ethnicity and education*, 8(1), 69-91.